upwards, will, in the case of fire, destroy a vast amount of property, and render it impracticable to rebuild in most of the courts and alleys of London.

Clause 51 proposes to enact that for discouraging, and prohibiting, the use of buildings unfit for dwellings, &c. &c.; it shall not be lawful to *occupy buildings*, or *let* or *suffer them to be occupied*, as dwellings, if the rooms are of less dimensions than one square, or 100 superficial feet.

The effect of this clause would be to deprive the chief part of the poor of London of their habitations, and to send them from the vicinity of their employment, to the distant suburbs, to seek the shelter that is denied them in the town; *i. e.* if there be sufficient houses of the qualified description to receive them, which I question.

And to give an instance of the destructive effect of the Act in the ward of Tower alone, which may be taken as a fair sample of the other parts of the city, I have ascertained that there would be upwards of 170 houses in alleys, courts, &c., chiefly of the poor, which could not be rebuilt. And under the restrictive clause of occupancy, I am of opinion that the poor tenants of one-half of the above number of houses would be turned into the street! Such would be the mild effect of the proposed measure.

And if I might venture to suggest such a thing on behalf of the poor working man, I would say a house with small rooms, was better than no house at all—than one three or four miles from his work—or even than one of the modern palaces, called union houses.

I have thus, Sir, endeavoured to draw your attention to some few of the severe enactments proposed by this Bill, which will destroy a vast amount of property, be a dreadful nuisance to the public, and crush the poor mechanic or labourer, by turning him out of his house. And as this will be the case with thousands in this great metropolis and its suburbs, the following question will necessarily arise,—where are they to go? and what is to become of them? It is not likely that they will be allowed to occupy a superior class of houses, and as persons cannot be compelled to erect houses for them, what is to become of them?

There are many other parts of the Bill which are exceedingly objectionable, but which are of minor importance to those referred to; but I trust that the public journals will join in endeavouring to draw the attention of the public to this measure, so that it may not pass into law, without due consideration and revision.

I am, Sir, faithfully yours,
GEORGE AITCHISON.

Muscovy-court, Trinity-square.

NEW BUILDING-ACT.

SIR,—I cannot conceive why, in the proposed new Buildings' Bill, the district-surveyors' fees for most buildings, and particularly for small houses, should be considerably less than the fees are under the present Act, although great additional duties and responsibilities are proposed to be cast upon the surveyors, and notwithstanding the legislature, seventy years ago, at the then scale of money and price of living, deemed the fees then granted not too much. It would seem to me as though the framers of the Bill desire either to court the favour of that class of small speculative builders who, by their numerous evasions, cause district-surveyors the most trouble, or else to induce, by incompetent remuneration, neglect on the part of the officers under the new Act.

I am, Sir, your humble servant,
ONE WHO DESIRES EVERY MAN TO BE FAIRLY PAID.

DISGRACEFUL PRACTICES OF SHAM-SURVEYORS.

SIR,—I wish proceedings could be taken by respectable surveyors to put a stop to the nefarious practices of certain unauthorized surveyors. I am now somewhat reluctantly compelled to allude to an advertisement lately exhibited in your respectable and valuable periodical, with reference to these self styled surveyors undertaking the usual business of surveyors "for nothing,"—at least for "no charge if not approved of."

Of course you are well aware that the members of our body have, by their friends, to be educated at a vast outlay of capital; notwithstanding all this, there are some individuals who perhaps have only been at surveyors as office fags, or perhaps in the offices of builders in the same capacity, and who may learn just sufficient, when combined with their natural impudence, to make themselves very mischievous and annoying to the regular professor, and possessing this quack knowledge, or rather ignorance, fancy themselves adept in the business; although, not always appearing openly, yet sufficiently so to cause some poor creatures to be gulled and caught in the net spread for them; and in some shape or other, for a time, carry on their assumed calling, notwithstanding all the efforts of the regular professional to discover and expose them; such persons in the end bring disgrace on the very name of the profession, and much prejudice to the business of the honest surveyor.

I have heard of two instances lately, when two public edifices were advertised, and that the builders were to meet to appoint their surveyor to take out quantities; and as this branch of the profession needs a man of the greatest practical knowledge, and well-known standing, it of course requires the builders to pause ere they risk perhaps fortune itself in the hands of one of these quacks, nevertheless I have heard that in the first case, when the regular body of respectable builders met, that seven voted for one respectable surveyor, and eight voted for another, when about fourteen builders (at least so they called themselves) started up and voted for a man whom none of the respectable builders knew, or indeed ever heard of, yet of course the majority out-voted the others. What was the consequence? The quantities were supplied, and pretty quantities they were; for almost all the respectable builders declined tendering, and the one who succeeded threw up his contract, being frightened and rendered timid by the unknown and unusual way in which these quantities were got up. The second instance only occurred last week, when the same party came again with his friendly army; but I am thankful to hear he was smelt out, and deservedly rejected, and, I trust, will be marked for the future. How a man, lodging in an upper story, and that in a questionable neighbourhood over the water, can be supposed to be responsible to the builders for his errors (if he make any), I know not. I would suggest that when this or any other touter comes in, to the prejudice of the regular man of business, that all builders wishing to tender should make a deposit of five guineas, and I am sure this would soon scatter entirely this mischievous class.

I deem it essential to the benefit of the profession, whether of builder or surveyor, to put a stop to the fraudulent practice of sham surveyors, of which I am assured you will see the propriety, and instead of your affording aid and assistance, will persist in not encouraging any such nefarious advertisements, unless with proper name and address, as your journal exists for the good of the professional and artisan. I think you will see the justice of my remarks, for I am well assured a paltry love of gain will never meet with your approval, or of that of the public; and if you would only refuse to take in any of their disgraceful and prejudicial advertisements, (as the "Broker-alley" system would soon be at an end.

You will say, perhaps, that the public benefits by competition among all trades: this may be, but it cannot be so by a profession, where time alone is the only article that can be brought to market. Nevertheless, if competition must be resorted to, let it be done in an open and straightforward way, with real name and address, quite undisguised, and not based on deceit and perhaps fraud. Let any man who chooses to do work for nothing, if not approved, do it openly, so that he may be known by the regular man of business, who may by chance be pitted against him.

From a subscriber since you first began,
Z.

EXPRESSION OF CHARACTER IN BUILDINGS.

SIR,—Will you permit me to add the following remarks upon a late original design in THE BUILDER, viz. a "Design for Schools," p. 102, to the judicious, but necessarily limited observations of your own which accompanied it? They are dictated I trust solely by a desire to expose error in principle, and not from any pleasure in discovering it in the works of an individual.

If an architectural façade is to express the purpose or destination of the building, or (in other words) to possess a character in harmony with its intended uses, then is there an error of some magnitude in the design to which I have called attention,—I mean in its general arrangement; for by this arrangement such an expression could not be given to the exterior, or at least could not be given to the parts so as truly to characterize the whole. It is called a "Design for Schools," but is in reality, *a design for a dwelling-house, with school-rooms attached*. The principal feature in the design, and the part in which architectural embellishment (which is the language of the art) is chiefly employed, is a dwelling-house. What character is the designer to give it? Is it that of a domestic building? If he does he is not in that particular incorrect; and if he *does* he falsely characterizes the general design. I call the dwelling-house the principal feature in the design, for it is not only the centre, but it is of superior elevation, being two stories in height, while the school-rooms are but wings, and of one story, occupying, in fact, the relative position of the offices in a domestic establishment. No appropriateness, therefore, of style, or exterior embellishment applied to the school-rooms, could produce an effect that would characterize the whole composition, or repair the fault of the general arrangement.

The error, therefore, consists in giving that part of the building which is ornamental, or at least of a subordinate purpose, the place of principal in the composition, and the essential or principal parts in regard to the destination of the edifice the place subordinate; but in the design in question the dwelling-house is not only made to occupy a position too prominent, but it is of dimensions disproportionate to the other and more important parts of the building:—supposing the scale 30 feet to the inch (for that given with the drawings is evidently an error of the printer), the domestic part of the building contains 5,600 superficial feet of flooring, while the two school-rooms together contain but 4,080 feet, or thereabouts!

I wish it to be understood that I am not charging these errors upon this design, as presenting a solitary instance of their commission, or as the only one in my mind's eye in which they exist; I merely point to it as an illustration of my remarks; but which, however, its appearance in THE BUILDER suggested. There are other designs, and executed ones too, in which such mistakes may be seen, and their name is *legion!*

Whilst upon the subject of expression of character in buildings, I would just remark upon the too frequent absence of it, even where the error I pointed out in the general arrangement does not exist to militate against its introduction.

Most of the other qualities requisite in a building, all understand, and intuitively perceive the importance of, and when not biassed by opposing circumstances, endeavour to the best of their ability to obtain. All builders know, for instance, that a structure should be solid, that is to say, have a certain quantity of material, arranged on such principles as will insure the needful degree of strength. That it should also be commodious, conforming in its plan (if a public building) to the operations of the institution, or, if a domestic one, to the wants and habits of its inmates. Most builders are aware that it should have all its parts arranged with regularity and proportion to each other; that the height should be proportioned to the horizontal dimensions; that length should be extended with due reference to breadth, and the apertures be proportioned to the piers. These qualities are exceedingly important, but they are at the same time comparatively mechanical. An edifice may possess all the requisites of solidity, convenience, order, and adaptation to its uses, and yet, without expression of character, be an effort of artistic design, properly so called. It is but a dull and lifeless mass until the Genius of Architecture breathe into it the soul of the art—until it receives in the style and decoration of the parts, both interior and exterior, a character, analogous to its uses and destination, and express such uses and destination as distinctly as the language possessed by the art can utter it. It should in fact so

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